

# **Cooperative wants to run power line through Grand Staircase-Escalante Monument**

By Robert Gehrke

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Posted: 7:12 PM- A power cooperative that provides electricity to southern Utah towns of Tropic, Panguitch and others is seeking approval to build a transmission line through the Grand Staircase-Escalante Monument to help keep up with electric demands.

The 138-kilovolt power line, which would be built by Garkane Energy Cooperative, would run alongside an existing Rocky Mountain Power line through Dixie National Forest and the national monument.

It would replace an old, inadequate line that now runs through Bryce Canyon National Park, said Bryant Shakespear, planning engineer for Garkane.

"Our new line would be much more visible. There will be larger poles and that's why we propose to follow an existing transmission line that would be similar and that way wouldn't have as large impacts on the visual integrity" in the area, he said.

Building alongside the Rocky Mountain Power line would minimize the need for new roads and the disturbance inside the monument and forest, he said.

Shakespear said that, because of the growth in communities like Hatch, Panguitch, and Cedar Mountain, the existing power line is inadequate to meet the needs during peak power usage in the winter months and Garkane has had to use diesel generators.

"Based on our forecasts that will meet our needs for the foreseeable future, for the design life of the line," he said. Parts or all of the old line could be torn down and the land reclaimed.

The U.S. Forest Service announced last month that it would conduct an environmental impact study on the proposed power line construction. Public meetings on the power line proposal were scheduled for today in Panguitch and Thursday night in Cannonville.